



Langer Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251550
Inspection date	05 December 2005
Inspector	Moira Oliver

Setting Address	St Edmunds Hall, Langer Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 2HS
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Telephone number	07961 825637
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E-mail

Registered person	Langer Playgroup
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Sessional care
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ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Langer Playgroup is well established and has been open for more than 14 years. It operates from St Edmunds Church Hall which is located close to the seafront in Felixstowe, the local school and park. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Thursdays during term time, from 09:05 to 11:35.

There are currently 18 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 7 children receive

funding for nursery education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs.

The pre-school employs four members of staff and a regular volunteer and supports child care students from the local college. Two of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a recognised early year's qualification. The pre-school receives support from the Local Authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because practitioners follow current and appropriate health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, food such as milk and dairy produce is stored in a clean fridge where the temperature is monitored. Tables are cleaned before snack and staff who prepare the food hold an up-to-date certificate in Food Hygiene and wash their hands before preparing food.

Children understand simple good health and hygiene practices as they manage hand washing independently, however, at times a communal towel is used which may spread infection.

Children are nourished with a mid morning snack. They have the choice of juice or milk to drink and staff help them to pour their own. Staff do not always use snack time as an opportunity to promote healthy eating, however, children do experience a range of tastes. Water is available in the play room on the window ledge behind the curtain and staff report that the children know where it is and do, at times, request a drink. Less confident children, or those who find communication more difficult, may be thirsty because the jug is out of sight and reach.

Children enjoy physical activity with regular visits to the local park where they use the apparatus to practice skills such as climbing, sliding, crawling, swinging and balancing. They have daily opportunities to climb on the indoor climbing frame and to use a slide. Staff support less confident children to practice their climbing and enable them to move across the climbing frame to access the slide.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. Children come into a bright room where the toys and activities are set out invitingly. The premises are secure and children cannot leave them unattended. Staff carry out daily risk assessments on the premises and the equipment to ensure children's safety.

Children are safe on the short outings that take place weekly. The staff ensure that there are sufficient adults and the children know to keep in the line and to hold

hands. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they wait for the 'green man' to be illuminated at the crossing before crossing the road. They keep together in a group, understand the need to walk, and the dangers of the traffic through regular, appropriate reinforcement and explanations from the staff.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem when staff encourage them at activities such as the climbing frame and support them to have a go.

Children show interest in what they do as they huddle round a member of staff to look at the photographs of recent activities. Children excitedly point out themselves and their friends in the photographs and recall the events with accuracy. Children are able to concentrate for extended periods whilst making their 'Christmas door hangers' and sorting out the letters to form the words.

Children ask questions throughout the session, they are interested in finding out what is for snack and where they are going on their walk. They acquire new knowledge and skills as they learn to use the tape recorder effectively, winding it back to the beginning of the story.

Children make positive relationships with each other as they seek out their friends to join them on the climbing frame and dress-up as fire-officers to fight the fires. They are beginning to distinguish between right and wrong as adults support them to share the toys fairly when others try to snatch.

The children under three years of age enjoy the sessions and the activities which the staff adapt to suit all abilities. They are supported to settle at the playgroup and generally come in happily. Staff have been introduced to the 'Birth to three matters' framework but have not yet developed it to include it in their practice.

Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good and children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. There is a busy and productive atmosphere where children are relaxed and happy. Staff are caring and know the children's individual needs and value each child's contribution. They show an interest in what the children do and respond appropriately to their requests. The staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, they plan and provide a range of activities to stimulate the children's learning, covering all areas of the curriculum. Activities are linked and extended giving children opportunities to develop their ideas and expand upon what they have learnt. For example, after adding a lot of water to the sand tray and exploring its properties, they went to the beach to experiment and develop their learning, extending it to the natural world. Assessment records are kept and are being developed to make them more informative to parents and to aid

planning. They now include photographs and relevant, individual comments.

Children are happy and confident and enjoy their time at the playgroup. They initiate their own play and are becoming independent, some manage a simple tape recorder to listen to a story and are able to show others how to use it. They manage hand washing and some are learning to use a dustpan and brush to sweep up the sand.

Children communicate confidently as they share their ideas in play. They enjoy many opportunities to write with a range of materials. Children request pens and make letter shapes in the sand on the beach. Children understand that print carries meaning as they dictate their letters to Santa Claus. Children enjoy books and turn one page at a time as they role-play reading to each other.

Children confidently count in their play and in the large group. They enjoy number rhymes and play games with a die, corresponding each dot to the prickles on the hedgehog. Staff introduce mathematical language through practical activities such as folding a letter to fit into an envelope. They regularly talk about and compare shape and size.

Children have excellent opportunities to explore their environment both in the playgroup and outside in the local community. They visit the park and the beach as well as the church and the shops linking the visits with stimulating, fun activities. For example, children collected leaves and twigs to bring back to make into a large tree which children added to after each outing. They have opportunities to explore a range of media as they fix boxes and cartons together with glue, paper clips and string, etcetera. They learn respect for others as they find out about their own and other cultures through celebrations and stories. Children delight as they re-visit activities and experiences through the range of photographs taken.

Children use their imaginations as they enjoy role play, exploring the variety of settings the role play area becomes, for example, a shoe shop, hairdressers and a hospital. They have opportunities to explore a range of textures such as glue, pebbles, sand and 'gloop' and enjoyed the feeling on their hands when hand painting. Children listen to music and sing songs and rhymes daily, the staff are developing this area to enrich the children's appreciation of music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet their individual needs. The committee employs extra staff when necessary to ensure that all children can take part and are included fully in the setting. Children receive appropriate support from the staff who know them well, staff play with the children extending their language and learning. Children make choices and decisions as they confidently come into the room and select their activity from the inviting range that has been set out.

Children understand reasonable behaviour as staff take time to give simple explanations about why they should not run indoors. They are polite as they thank

the member of staff for their biscuits at snack time. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others as they sensitively talk about children's families that are different to their own. They celebrate festivals with cooking and craft activities increasing the children's awareness of the wider world.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the sharing of information between parents and staff which enhances their learning and provides consistency of care. For example, daily chats, news letters, notices on the display board and photographs. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. The staff are developing open sessions where the parents can take part in the activities with their children and have the opportunity to discuss their child's assessment records. Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive at the playgroup. They speak highly of the provision, the individual attention their children receive and the friendliness of the staff. There is a complaints procedure available which is now out of date due to new legislation.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by vetted, qualified, experienced staff who have a high regard for the well-being of all children. They ensure the provision is safe and the children are treated with respect and kindness.

The adult:child ratio and staff deployment positively supports children, contributing to their good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting and receive individual attention when necessary.

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure appropriate care for the children, however, they are in need of up-dating and are not known by all staff. They group are reviewing their policies at present, developing and evaluating them. Staff induction procedures are not consistent, not all staff have read the policies and therefore do not know the all the procedures which could effect the safety of the children.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The play-leader is aware of her role and communicates with the staff on a daily basis. The staff understand their roles and know which activities are planned for the day, including the learning objectives for the children. All the staff are supported and keen to attend training to improve their knowledge and understanding in child care. The play-leader takes time out of the session to monitor the provision, she observes the children and staff deployment and evaluates her findings. For example, observations revealed that one table was not being used, regardless of the activity set out. Consequently they changed the room to make a large floor area instead of the table for children to use with the train-set.

Overall, the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Plans are evaluated, the staff evaluate the activities as well as the sessions which help when planning the next program. Assessment follows the stepping stones and staff have devised a new system to suit the younger children.

Self-appraisals were planned to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the provision but have not taken place due to staff changes. Staff's strengths and interests are now being used, for example, a new staff member is organising open days where parents come in and take part in the sessions with their children. Observations take place during the sessions to monitor and evaluate strengths and weaknesses.

The group are developing the music activities, they use articles from magazines about music and are always on the lookout for ideas in this area. They plan to have instruments out more frequently giving children more opportunities to develop an interest in music.

Most of the staff have read the policy for lost and uncollected children and parents are reminded that they can see the policies at any time, ensuring most adults are aware and able to act appropriately in all situations.

All staff, volunteers and visitors are recorded in the diary to ensure there is a correct record of visitors on the premises.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that water is visible and all children can access it at all times especially those less confident who may not want to, or be able to ask
- improve outcomes for children under three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters' framework
- review the complaints procedures in light of the new legislation.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure there is a robust induction procedure in place for all new members of staff and volunteers.

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